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PAKISTAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF

BY

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PAKISTAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Nadim Qamar

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U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013 25 April 1991

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#### ABSTRACT

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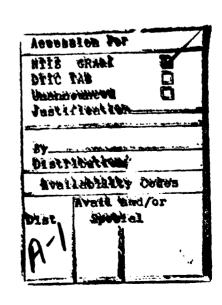
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The fact of geography makes Pakistan an indispensable element of Gulf strategic planning, while traditional ties based on common religion and cultural affinities facilitate establishment of trade, commerce, and economic relationships. Pakistan enjoys close and friendly relations with the Gulf countries based on deep-rooted cultural ties, shared history, and similarity of outlook on regional security. Pakistan cannot be tranquil while the Gulf is in turmoil.





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#### PAKISTAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF

#### INTRODUCTION

The Persian Gulf and its littoral have been in turmoil for over a decade. This region was still nursing the wounds of bloody confrontation between Iran and Iraq when the situation once again exploded with Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. August 2, 1990, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, will go down as a seminal day in the turbulent history of the Gulf.

A week earlier, Iraq had accused Kuwait of waging "economic war," but had given assurances it would not act against Kuwait as long as Kuwait showed a willingness to talk about outstanding bilateral issues. A few days later, an Iraqi delegate had attended a Saudi-sponsored Iraq-Kuwait meeting in Jeddah, but walked away on the second day claiming Kuwaiti unwillingness to negotiate seriously on outstanding issues. The Saudi hosts failed to persuade Iraq to continue the talks. The Iraqi invasion followed immediately with a degree of efficiency suggesting that it had long been planned. This led the region to another highly explosive situation, which has been dubbed "the first post-cold war crisis."

Brief and intense diplomacy ensued to resolve the crisis peacefully, but right from the outset it demonstrated little hope of success. This led to the start of another bloody confrontation, the full consequences of which cannot be foreseen. This time, the conflict is entirely of a different dimension. It not only involves outside powers, but also has given rise to unique and unprecedented alliances. Traditional rivals are now sitting side by side, instead of facing each other. The conflict, though rooted in a regional dispute, has attained global dimensions. A 30-nation coalition led by the United States is engaged in "the Third World War" against Iraq, which stands almost totally isolated in the world. Though the Iraqis continue to employ

loud rhetoric about the Palestinian cause, they have not been able to convince most of the Muslim countries that they invaded Kuwait in order to help the Palestinians.

Pakistan's contiguity to the Gulf endows if with a strategic significance that can hardly be overemphasized. Pakistan has a 500-mile-long coastline along the Arabian Sea merging with the Gulf of Oman in the Persian Gulf approaches. It also has a common border stretching over 350 miles with Iran. Pakistan has long standing political, cultural, and economic relations with all the littoral states. These factors have placed Pakistan in a position where it cannot remain unaffected by developments in this region. Pakistan, while remaining neutral during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, was an active mediator throughout the conflict to try to achieve a settlement between the two countries. Many diplomatic initiatives were launched by Pakistan both at the international level and within the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) forum.

With the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Pakistan was once again directly affected. Besides the oil price hike, which exerted tremendous pressure on its economy, there were other factors which further compounded the problem. A large Pakistani labor force was rendered jobless, which theretofore was a considerable source of foreign revenue. The invasion entailed an enormous financial burden on Pakistan to transport its workers home and provide them alternative jobs. Besides the economic impact, there also was a cultural shock from this Iraqi aggression which forced Pakistan to immediately condemn Baghdad's action. Pakistan demanded immediate withdrawal by Iraq and restoration of the sovereign status of Kuwait. It also contributed significantly to the multinational force in Saudi Arabia by sending a contingent of 11,000 troops.

With the coalition offensive against Iraq, the complexity of the problem has further been compounded. Apart from the evolving configuration of the crisis, and its global and regional antecedents, the possible short-term and long-term consequences of the war need to be assessed. The Middle East will never be the same even after the immediate crisis is resolved. The Gulf Cooperation Council has proved totally ineffective to provide security to the regional states. Traditional Middle East alignments such as monarchies versus republics and "haves" versus "have nots," no longer make sense. As an outcome of these crises, there may be residual tensions between and among the divided Arabs. Though the more pressing and immediate problem is to surmount and resolve the present crisis, it will also be necessary to deal with new post-crisis power configurations.

Future events in the region will affect Pakistan, even if it is not directly involved in any security arrangements. Both geostrategic location and historically deep-rooted economical and cultural interdependency will at least indirectly involve Islamabad in future security calculations.

### Aim

The aim of this paper is to study Pakistan's security relations with the Persian Gulf in the context of its geostrategic location and historically deep-rooted economical and cultural interdependency with the Gulf states.

The writer will approach the subject in the following sequence:

- o Historical overview of the Persian Gulf;
- o Pakistan's relations with the Gulf countries;
- o the Iraq-Kuwait crisis; and
- o the post-crisis security environment.

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PERSIAN GULF

The Persian Gulf has figured prominently in history since ancient times. Along its shores flourished the ancient civilizations of Babylon and Mesopotamia. Deep imprints have been left on Gulf sands by the Persians and the Greeks. The Portuguese, Dutch, and the French have each ventured into these waters in the not-too-distant past. The British converted the Gulf into their personal lake almost a century and a half ago. With the explosive situation created as a result of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, the United States under the umbrella of the UN Charter engaged in one of the most bloody wars of the history of this region.<sup>2</sup>

The Gulf has become the focus of attention of the entire world. Is it only the hydrocarbon deposits which have given this area such strategic importance? Are the regional ambitions displayed by Iraq so important to the world that they threaten the peace and stability not only of the region, but also of the entire globe? What makes Mr. George Bush, the President of the United States, go to the extent of converting a regional dispute into a multinational war. Future prospects in the aftermath of the present crisis remain a wide-open chapter, which will only be written when the present volcanic situation is stabilized. To understand the complexities at work one needs to address the geo-historical background, the political setting, and the socio-economic conditions of the region. While doing so, the focus will remain on Pakistan's placement in this complex environment.

### The Geo-historical Background

The Persian Gulf, with a total area of 90,000 square miles, is an extension of the Arabian Sea with which it is joined by a narrow strip of water, 25 miles across. The Gulf stretches from the Shatt-al-Arab in the northwest to the Strait of Hormuz in the southeast, a total distance of

600 miles. It is on average 200 miles wide and has a maximum depth of 300 feet, thus making it hazardous for supertankers and large naval vessels. There are eight countries which share the waters of the Gulf, i.e., Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE, and Oman. Iran has the longest coastline and geographically dominates the entire northern coast of the Gulf. Iraq and Saudi Arabia have smaller coastal stretches bordering the Gulf. While the Persian Gulf outlet is strategically important to Iraq, it has constructed an extensive network of pipelines through Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, which also gives it oil exporting terminals on the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia also has outlets on the Red Sea, unlike some countries that are dependent on the Gulf alone. The former "Trucial States," (now the United Arab Emirates) lie along the southern edge of the Gulf, with Oman strategically placed at the bottleneck. Bahrain's and Qatar's shores lie exclusively in the Gulf.

The Soviet Union's southern borders are about 800 miles from the Gulf, while the available bases to them in Afghanistan are only 500 miles. Pakistan's western tip of Baluchistan Province (the Mekran Coast) is approximately 300 miles from the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is the largest Gulf country, followed by Saudi Arabia. Bahrain is by far the smallest.<sup>4</sup>

# Demography

Except for Iran and Iraq the countries are sparsely populated as they have lacked the natural resources to sustain life. Over 60 million inhabitants of the Gulf are sharply divided on an ethnic basis principally between Persians and Arabs. The animosity between these two can be traced as far back as the Battle of Qadisiya in A.D. 768, when a small Arab army defeated the Zoroastrian Persians. Since then, there has been an abiding dislike for each other. Even after twelve centuries of having a common faith with the Arabs,

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in his book, <u>My Story</u>, describes the advent of Islam into Persia as the occupation of his country by the Arabs. Ayatollah Khomeini tried to convert Iran into a theocratic Muslim state and, therefore, by all canons of Muslim brotherhood should have been on the best of terms with his Muslim neighbors. However, his concept of Islam was anathema to the rest of the countries of the Gulf. Geoffrey Gadswell of the <u>Christian Science Monitor</u> calls the Iran-Iraq border the "great ethnic and cultural divide on the earth's face."

Although all the countries of the Gulf have a common faith, the demographic picture is quite complex. Iran's southern province of "Khuzestan" has a large Arab population, which Iraq has been referring to as "Arabistan." While Iran is "Shiite" dominated, the two holiest cities of Shiism are in Iraq.<sup>5</sup> Sixty percent of Iraqis are Shias. The majority of Bahrainis are Shias, and Iran has often claimed Bahrain as part of Iran. Dubai of the UAE also has a Shia majority. The problem becomes compounded because all these states have Sunni rulers. Saudis are Sunnite Wahabis, with religious beliefs quite contrary to those followed by the Shia clergy and hence are not well accepted by Iranians.

In this web of religious complexity, Pakistan follows a more open and accommodative approach towards Islam. As a policy it does not approve/allow fundamentalistic fanaticism, which makes Pakistan acceptable by all mainstream religious factions. It has a mixture of all these religious sects, which interact positively with each other, thus creating a happy balance in the society. That is why Pakistan is considered as a model not only in Gulf states, but also in other Muslim countries of North Africa, Turkey, Bangladesh, and other Far-Eastern countries. It is this fact which keeps Pakistan in a leadership role of the OIC.

## Political Setting

The British, during the heyday of their empire had assumed the role of protecting the countries of the Gulf from international disorders and external threats. With the oil discoveries of the 20th century, the desirability of their presence in this region became even greater. Russian occupation of northern Iran after World War II raised the fear of Soviet designs to gain access to oil fields in the Gulf. After World War II, the British were unable to retain their colonies and began granting them independence. All the Gulf countries eventually achieved independence, but soon border disputes, ethnic rivalries, regional hegemonistic aspirations, ideological inroads, and outside powers turned the tranquil waters of the Gulf into a cauldron. Mosaddaq's collapse in Iran because he had nationalized Iranian oil companies, and the subsequent extensive military assistance from the United States to the Shah were indicative of the increasing interest of the USA in this region.

The Soviets also continued to exert their influence by the signing of a Treaty of Friendship with Iraq after the emergence of the leftist Baath Party of Iraq in 1968.<sup>6</sup> Before Iraq realigned itself with the Soviet Union, American diplomatic involvement with Iraq was intense and U.S. military and economic assistance had been flowing to that country. During early stages of the "Cold War," Iraq played a critical role in U.S. strategy as Secretary Dulles sought to build a "northern tier" buffer against Soviet ambitions in the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> However, the Iraqi monarchy and its strong man, General Nuri Said, had begun to add the burden of a "pro-American" image to that of being considered in nationalist circles as "pro-British," while the turbulent currents of the Palestine issue also swept the Arab world with increasing force. The growth of the U.S.-Iraqi relationship came to an abrupt end in the July 1958 revolution, and the Baghdad Pact was renamed CENTO (the Central

Treaty Organization) without Iraq as a member. Iraq turned toward the Soviet Union, and a long twilight in American influence in that country began. The so-called "tilt toward Iraq" in U.S. policy during the Iran-Iraq War was a relationship more of convenience to mutually undermine Iran than a real breakthrough toward better understanding.<sup>8</sup>

## Trade Relationship - Historical Evidence

Pakistan emerged as a sovereign country on the world map when British India was granted independence and partitioned in 1947. Hence, while tracing the historical evidence of a relationship of pre-independence Pakistan with the Persian Gulf region, reference will be made to India, which itself was the great Muchal Empire before becoming a British colony. 9 Muslims came to India principally through two different routes in two different periods. The first entry by Muslims into the Indian subcontinent was made in A.D. 711 when an Arab expedition entered Baluchistan and Sind. 10 Coastal trade permitted significant cultural exchanges between the Gulf region and India. Sultans of Delhi enjoyed cordial relations with Muslim potentates in the Gulf. Muchal states played dynamic roles in commerce. The 18th century found the larger Muslim states in reduced political circumstances, and this extended to commerce as well. Muchals of Delhi lost control over part of Surat by the 1730s. Parts of Iran changed hands frequently and were seldom subject to any central authority. While the large states were in decline, Muslim leaders presided over localized politics: Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain under various Utbi Arabs; Omani and East African enclaves under the Al Bu Said; and largely Hindu Mysore under the Muslim Tipu Sultan. There always remained a strong trade and cultural exchange between these Gulf states and the Muslims in India. This historical linkage is still very proudly felt between Pakistan and the Gulf states. This historical linkage is evidenced by the fact that

large numbers of Pakistanis continue to work in the Gulf states, and many of the Gulf states also invest their assets both in private and government sectors in Pakistan.

#### PAKISTAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GULF STATES

Pakistan's desire to maintain special relationships with Islamic countries, and especially those of the Persian Gulf, was immediately apparent after 1947. The Muslim world constitutes a special category and has been receiving some legislative attention in all phases of Pakistan's parliamentary life. Early moves in this direction began with a proposal during the first Constituent Assembly for a conference of Muslim prime ministers, along with more economic and cultural contacts with independent Islamic states. 11 However, divergent policies and ideologies pursued by the leaders of Pakistan and the Middle Eastern states led to an estrangement of relations between Pakistan and leading Arab states. Whereas the basis of Pakistani nationalism was religious, Arab nationalism was essentially secular in character. Nevertheless, the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the resulting oil embargo against the West led to a revival of Pan-Islamism, a development which coincided with Pakistan's desperate search for new friends that started immediately after the loss of East Pakistan during the 1971 War. For Pakistan, nothing could be more pleasing than to have a special relationship with the Muslim world of the Middle East. Thus, the Pan-Islamism started a fresh era of Pakistan's relationship with the Middle East, and especially with Gulf states, which continued to grow at a steady pace.

# Pakistan's Foreign Policy in Retrospect

Pakistan's political history has been characterized as unmistakenly stamped with the mark of authoritarianism until 1972. Full dress debates on

foreign policy were held on only a few occasions in Pakistan's legislative history, until the present constitution was adopted in 1973. A glance over the foreign policy of the country reveals that until 1974 it mainly revolved around its relations with India, alliances with the big powers, and to a much lesser extent the affairs of Afro-Asian states. Beyond these general outlines, decision makers never made any serious effort to define foreign policy objectives. With the limited opportunities available to the legislators, they only debated these issues, suggested options to the policymakers, and criticized the functioning of implementation machinery.

After 1971, Pakistan's foreign policy was seriously reviewed in the light of past experiences and achievements. A strong impulse was felt to improve relations with Gulf countries; a reappraisal was given to the relations with regional countries and superpowers. The Middle East War of 1973 and oil embargo thereafter marked a great breakthrough in Pakistan's relations with Muslim countries, and thus a new era of foreign policy commenced which continues until the present. Formation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Afghanistan crisis are some of the important milestones which proved to be instrumental in steering Pakistan's foreign policy. The present Gulf crisis also is bound to have significant effects on Pakistan's foreign policy.

# Fundamentals of Foreign Policy

Legislative interest in the fundamentals of foreign policy has been quite high. Beyond the apparent agreement on such questions as the country's security interests, its political independence and territorial integrity, its economic and social development, and the promotion of peace and friendship

with all nations, legislators have not been of one mind. Cases in point are the following:

- o In 1957, Pakistan's foreign policy with regard to security interests shifted by adopting a pro-United States stance. But in 1962, the large-scale supply of arms to India created heated legislative debates on foreign policy. The arms resulted in a great imbalance in military strength and thus became a grave security concern.
- o Economic aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy have also been debated on many occasions. The basic difference has been between those who support dependence on foreign aid as a development factor and those who condemn the nation's dependence on, and the resulting political subservience to, the aid donors. After the Arab-Israeli War in 1973, economic factors played a predominant role in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy.
- o Pakistan has played an active role in the formation of new international organizations to facilitate development of Third World countries. However, Pakistan's policies toward Third World countries became a serious matter of legislative concern when the Suez crisis revealed flaws in Pakistan's relationship with the Arab world. Legislators were disappointed with Pakistan's inability to convince the Arab nations of its support and to match the Indian propaganda regarding solidarity with the Third World.
- o Pakistan's fraternal relations with other Islamic countries are based on shared values of culture and history and are nourished by a common faith and spiritual heritage. These ties have continued to expand and constitute a central pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. With its deep commitment to the promotion of Islamic solidarity, Pakistan played a significant role in establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Since 1974,

Pakistan has development close economic and political ties with Gulf countries.

# Pakistan's Relations with the Gulf States

A critical look at Pakistan and the Gulf states reveals that this part of the world, despite being geostrategically important and richly endowed with natural resources, especially oil, continues to suffer from insecurity and an uncertain economic future. Traditionally most of the states of this region have enjoyed close cooperation with the West, except Iraq, which enjoyed good relations with the Soviet Union, and more recently Iran. During the cold war, both superpowers placed a higher priority on increasing their political influence in the region than on generating regional security and concomitant economic development. This seemed to be quite natural because each superpower was obsessed with the idea that if the other held an asymmetric position in the region, its own socioeconomic and political relations with regional states would be jeopardized. A wave of political uncertainty resulted in Pakistan and the Gulf states, thus forcing most to give top priority to defense and armaments to the neglect of other concerns.

Pakistan's contacts with the Gulf are deep-rooted. Gwadar was in fact part of Oman and was ceded in 1958 to Pakistan by Muscat as a gesture of good will. <sup>13</sup> A large number of Mekranis are still being recruited by Omani authorities to live and work in Oman. <sup>14</sup> There is a large number of Pakistani workers in the UAE contributing to development of that country and remitting precious foreign exchange to Pakistan. Foreign exchange earnings sent by 446,000 workers in the Gulf states (less Saudi Arabia) were equal to the total export earnings of Pakistan in 1985. <sup>15</sup> According to a survey conducted in 1985, there were approximately 1.79 to 2.46 million Pakistanis in the Middle East generally. <sup>16</sup> The exact figures are difficult to assess as

there are a large number of illegal immigrants also in various Gulf states.

The breakdown of this labor force was estimated as follows: 17

Saudi Arabia 59 percent
UAE 15 percent
Qatar 8 percent
Kuwait 6 percent
Bahrain 3 percent
Other 9 percent

Until 1971, the security of the Gulf was almost unchallenged and was being looked after by the British. Since their withdrawal, great changes have taken place in the region. In spite of their acquisition of the most modern and highly sophisticated weapons, the Arab states of the Gulf have found themselves unable to ensure Gulf security solely through their own efforts. One reason was that in the early 1970s there was great polarization in the Middle East along political and ideological lines. While Saudi Arabia and the small Arab states of the Gulf were inclined toward pursuing generally prowestern foreign policies, Iraq (and Iran since its revolution) pursued other agendas. In their view, the conservative Arab regimes were propped up by Western countries to ensure the protection of outside interests in the Gulf.

Iraq supported the Dhofar rebellion in Oman in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The pressure of radical forces and the British withdrawal compelled the Arab Gulf states to move toward greater strategic cooperation with the Shah's Iran. The most prominent manifestation of this cooperation was the Iranian assistance to the Sultan of Oman in fighting the rebellion in Dhofar. During this period, Iran-Arab relations registered greatest improvement. There were exchanges of visits among heads of state of Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

After the 1975 Algiers Accord, Iraq became more cooperative. This was evident in the solidarity shown by Gulf countries in the mid 70s when they refused to bow to the demands of Western nations to desist from increasing oil

prices. In the mid 70s, the oil price/production battle had become so serious that the Gulf countries were apprehensive of Western/U.S. plans to seize oil installations in the Middle East. In October 1977, U.S. Energy Secretary James Schlesinger gave a statement in Washington that the United States would use armed intervention if necessary to safeguard oil fields in the Middle East. For that purpose, military exercises were undertaken in those areas of the United States where desert-like conditions prevailed. This caused a sharp reaction in the oil producing countries of the Middle East. In one positive way, this threat worked to make the Gulf states more conscious of their responsibility for security in the Gulf and led to serious efforts by them to formulate joint defense plans for the Gulf. With Saudi Arabia taking the lead, other Arab countries of the Gulf began to take measures for setting up a joint defense pact. Kuwait came out with strong support for a joint defense strategy to defend the Gulf against outside intervention. Noting the U.S. Energy Secretary's threat to use force for the capture of oil wells, it stressed the need for speeding up Saudi Arabian plans for a joint defense pact, though Kuwait itself then declined to join. Under this pact, Saudi Arabia had proposed to group Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, and the UAE. The aim of this pact was to protect the Gulf states from armed intervention. In nearly all of the Arab Gulf countries there was support for such an effort. In April 1977, the UAE President, Shaikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, had called upon the federated emirates to take a united stand to defend their country.

Until the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf states were of the view that the main danger to security in the Gulf emanated from threats from outside powers. This view was reinforced by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War effected a radical change in the security perceptions of the Arab states of the Gulf. Saudi Arabia

described the Khomeini regime as a "deadly enemy of Islam." Arab countries of the Gulf began increasingly to perceive a potential Iranian victory as an overriding threat to Gulf security. In 1982, Saudi Arabia agreed to set up a joint U.S.-Saudi body on military matters headed by the defense ministers of the two countries. This decision was taken during the visit by U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger to Saudi Arabia and was indicative of growing Saudi military links with the United States. Oman also received Weinberger on an official visit during which he held talks with the Sultan and Oman's defense officials on plans for providing American arms to Oman and the provision by Oman of facilities for the planned U.S. rapid deployment force.

## Security Relationship--Pakistan and the Gulf States

Pakistan, given its close relations with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, was greatly concerned over the security problems of this region.

Pakistan's security linkage with the Gulf region may be seen in light of the following factors:

o <u>Geostrategic Location</u>. Pakistan happens to be located in an area that can be described as a zone overlapping both South Asia and the Gulf region. The Pakistan of 1947 was undoubtedly regarded as part of South Asia, but with the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, Pakistan can more appropriately be regarded as part of the Middle East as well. The term "region" as applied in international relations is often arbitrary and is often employed only because the interested countries find within a given territorial area a number of interrelated problems that are of primary importance to them. So, depending on the interests involved or the issues one is seeking to analyze, Pakistan can usefully be considered as part of South Asia, South West Asia, the Gulf, or the Middle East. Physically it is located on the peripheries of the South

Asia and Gulf regions and enjoys a similar number of commonalities with each region.

- o <u>Religious Factor</u>. The second significant aspect of Pakistan's linkage with the Gulf countries is the spiritual ties that it enjoys with almost all the countries sharing the Gulf waters. Since its creation, Pakistan has not only worked hard to improve its relations with Muslim countries, but has consistently worked for the unity of the Muslim world. In 1949 it hosted the first Muslim World Economic Conference. <sup>18</sup> Pakistan's outlook toward the religion has been such that it enjoys respect and acceptance from all Muslim countries of the world.
- o Gulf-A Backyard of Pakistan. Strategically, the Gulf region can be regarded as the "backyard" of Pakistan. The collapse of Gulf stability would inevitably affect the wider region and might even destabilize Pakistan. In addition, the control of the region by an unfriendly power would not only enlarge its defense burden but would also compel Pakistan to seek a regional or extra-regional association in order to secure a strategic balance, generate sufficient confidence, and maintain a desired level of security. Pakistan's stakes in Gulf stability therefore, are potentially tremendous. Not only could the Gulf area be used as a staging ground or launching pad for intrigues and threats, but the fall of the Gulf to a hostile power could deprive Pakistan of the economic and trade benefits now accruing from Pakistan-Gulf state linkages. The very physical proximity makes it imperative for Pakistan to be extremely vigilant regarding developments in the Gulf. The effect of proximity is significantly pronounced with regard to Iran because of the common border and the fact that the Baluchi tribe is divided between these two countries. 19 A Baluch crisis on either side of the border can create major problems for both these countries.

- o <u>Economic Factor</u>. Prior to the oil boom of the early 70s, direct financial assistance to Pakistan from Islamic countries was almost nonexistent. However, by the middle of the 70s Pakistan had become one of the recipients of aid and loans on easy terms from the oil producing countries of the Gulf. Along with the flow of aid, many Gulf countries started investing their capital in various joint industrial projects.<sup>20</sup> With the increasing economic activity, trade also began to grow rapidly. A sizeable portion of Pakistan's agricultural and industrial exports found their way into Gulf markets.<sup>21</sup> In addition, many Pakistanis offered their skilled and semiskilled services to the Gulf countries and then by became major sources of foreign exchange for Pakistan.
- o <u>Technological Edge</u>. Pakistan has a definite technological edge over the Gulf states and can thus play a big role in this region. Pakistan's pool of expertise is well-recognized in the Gulf countries. It is generally believed that Pakistan can not only help the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) build up its defense system, but also can secure the Gulf's flank in the Province of Baluchistan.<sup>22</sup> Pakistan has been providing military training to many Gulf states. Pakistan's Air Force has worked for over two decades in training pilots of Gulf countries.<sup>23</sup> Many of the Gulf countries have shown keen interest in Pakistan's small but highly efficient weapons industry. Pakistan's Navy has also been involved in building up the navies of the Gulf states including that of Saudi Arabia.<sup>24</sup>

Pakistan has been playing a very significant role in the security of the Gulf region for almost 30 years. It has contributed to building the defense forces of the Gulf states both by sending advisory teams and by stationing military contingents in various Gulf states. Developing the Pakistan-Gulf security link has long been an aim of Republican Administrations in

Washington. As early as 1955, Brigadier Rothwell Brown, who headed the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Pakistan, told a Senate committee:

Whether you can defend the Middle East without a more positive force from Pakistan appears to be problematical . . . . It seems to me personally that the Middle East cannot be defended without a more positive use of the fighting manpower of Pakistan in a mobile offensive role.  $^{25}$ 

Pakistan's military links with the Gulf have always been based on economic as well as security needs of both the parties, i.e., Pakistan and the Gulf states.

# Pakistan and the U.S.: Convergence/Divergence of Perceptions in the Gulf

Before the revolution in Iran and Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, the main threat to security in the Persian Gulf, as perceived by the United States, was the growing influence of communist inspired movements, such as the Dhofari rebellion, and attempts by Soviet-supported states such as Iraq and South Yemen to subvert conservative states in the region. Both these countries had close military and political ties with the Soviet Union and were receiving huge Soviet arms supplies. For the United States, the USSR's bid to increase its influence in Iraq and South Yemen and to support the Dhofar insurrection were aimed at undercutting the Western position in the oil-rich Gulf area. To meet this threat, Washington adopted the policy of cultivating "regional influentials," particularly Iran and Saudi Arabia, and constructed a "twin pillar" policy in the Gulf. Strong security links were established by the United States with Iran and Saudi Arabia and billions of dollars of arms were transferred to these countries. The central objective of U.S. policy in the Gulf was to maintain the uninterrupted flow of cheap oil to Western industrial countries.

A big rise in the price of oil was perceived as a serious threat to the economic well-being of Western countries. The OPEC Summit held in Algeria in March 1975 was a big blow to the Western countries. American influence in Iran and Saudi Arabia failed to persuade those countries to curtail the rise in oil prices. Pakistan during this period showed complete solidarity with the OPEC countries and it fully shared and supported the view of the Gulf littoral states that the security of the Gulf must be the responsibility of Gulf states. Furthermore, Pakistan's perception of security issues in the Gulf until the Russian invasion of Afghanistan was not in full accord with that of the United States.

The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan brought about a great degree of convergence of perceptions of security imperatives in the Gulf between Pakistan and the United States. For both, the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan posed a danger to the security not only of Pakistan but also to that of the Persian Gulf. The conclusion of the 1981 Pakistan-U.S. Aid Package was a clear manifestation of this convergence. Both countries showed resolve to build up a credible deterrence to the communist threat.

With the overthrow of the Shah, the U.S. "twin pillar" policy to ensure Gulf stability collapsed. Saudi Arabia continued to play its role to stabilize oil prices and to finance strategically important but non-oil producing countries like Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, and North Yemen to help underwrite Western security interests. However, due to its inherent shortage of manpower, Saudi Arabia could not play the security role that Iran was playing under the Shah. This changed situation became the principal reason behind the enunciation of the "Carter Doctrine." President Carter in January 1980 made it clear that any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Gulf region would be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the

United States. While emphasizing that such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including force, President Carter made it clear that the United States could not defend the region by itself, but would count on support from nations that share the goal of resisting aggression. The Reagan Administration went further, when in March 1981, Secretary of State Alexander Haig announced that the United States planned to build a "strategic consensus" to counter the Soviet Union along a belt stretching from Pakistan to Egypt and including Turkey, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. While stress on strategic consensus was more or less consistent with the efforts made by the Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration's notion of security contained some new elements. It recognized the insufficiency of protecting the Gulf only from the threat of external invasion. It addressed the possibility of threats from within, and the need for U.S. forces to be prepared to intervene to assist friendly regimes threatened by internal crisis. Saudi Arabia was specifically mentioned in what has come to be called the "Reagan Corollary" to the Carter Doctrine. 26 While Pakistan shared the American perception of Soviet moves in and around the region as a threat to Gulf security, the insistence of the United States to include Israel in the "strategic consensus" led to a divergent view as Pakistan held fast to its traditional support of the Arab cause.

Meanwhile, the deployment of American naval forces in the Gulf caused further deterioration in relations between Iran and United States, but Pakistan maintained a neutral and friendly relationship with Iran throughout this period. However, close examination of Pakistan's stand on the Iran-Iraq War tends to reveal a divergence of security perceptions more from Iran than from the United States and the nonbelligerent Arab states. Pakistan's Navy and Air Force were committed to keeping the Gulf open to shipping if Iran had

attempted to block it.<sup>27</sup> Most Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, had asked Pakistan's assistance to develop their armed forces. Pakistan obliged not only by sending advisers but also by signing mutual security pacts with those countries.<sup>28</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, though not linked with the Iran-Irag War, was timed in a way that it had considerable impact on the regional security perceptions of both Pakistan and the United States. The Iranian Revolution had already delivered a serious blow to U.S. policies in the Gulf, and the Americans were looking for another country which could play the role of Iran in arresting Soviet influence. Other Gulf countries were too small, and India and Iraq were already strong allies of the Soviet Union. Under these circumstances Pakistan was the only country which could fit into the new U.S. strategy for the region. This started a new chapter in the relationship between Pakistan and the United States, as a result of which Pakistan again started getting military and economic aid from the United States. American military aid to Afghan freedom fighters was also funneled through Pakistan. But as far as Pakistan was concerned, all this was not without cost. Over three million Afghan refugees were (and still are) living in Pakistan, a presence which had (and still has) telling effects on Pakistan's economy. Large scale and to some extent unaccounted for weapon transfers to the Mujahideen created serious law and order problems for Pakistan because quite a substantial quantity of such equipment trickled back into the country. The Afghan Government intelligence agency, Khad, was actively involved in organizing sabotage activities in Pakistan. And Soviet long-range artillery, gunship helicopters, and air force planes frequently intruded into Pakistan's territory under the pretext of chasing Afghan Mujahideen guerrillas, and consequently inflicted serious damage to human life and property. The Soviets

even launched Scud missiles deep into areas of Pakistan which had nothing to do with Afghan operations.

American assistance, both in terms of diplomacy and military hardware, was well appreciated by Pakistan. However, when diplomatic talks (Geneva talks) were initiated to resolve the issue through indirect negotiations, Pakistan noticed a shift in Washington's stand. The talks finally ended by granting a face-saving withdrawal to Soviet troops, as a result of which they were allowed to leave behind a puppet regime (the Najibullah Government), an arrangement which was not well-received either by Afghanistan freedom fighters or by the Government of Pakistan. Under the negotiated accord the Russians left Kabul but Mujahideen guerrillas could not return to their homeland. They continue to fight from Pakistan's soil for liberation of their country. However, American assistance to both Pakistan and the Afghan freedom fighters has been stopped, resulting in big economic and military problems for Pakistan.

In addition, Pakistan's government feels offended by American suspicion regarding its peaceful nuclear program which had been ignored by the United States when it needed Pakistan as a proxy. Now that the Afghan crisis is past, it becomes an unresolved impediment to further concessions to Pakistan. Pakistan's government is bewildered by this discriminatory treatment, because the nuclear activities of countries like India and Israel are being ignored. Israel is even being encouraged to some extent by the American government in its pursuit of nuclear power. Meanwhile, Pakistan and the Afghan freedom fighters have been left in the lurch.

#### KUWAIT CRISIS

Like the invasion of Iran a decade earlier, Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait probably had less to do with a premeditated grand design than with his perennial sense of insecurity. In both cases, war was not his first choice but an act of last resort, taken only after he had tried other means. In both cases, the decision to use the military instrument of power was taken by him only a short while before the actual outbreak of hostilities and following a prolonged process of heightening threat perception. The Iranian campaign was aimed at containing a fanatical and uncompromising enemy who openly called for Saddam Hussein's head. Similarly, the Kuwait venture was designed to provide an instant infusion of vital financial resources for the economic reconstruction of Iraq, on which depended the political survival of the Iraqi leader. Though the occupation of Kuwait was initially achieved cheaply, it turned out to be the most expensive and dangerous scenario. It is quite logical and evidently substantiated by the sequence of events (diplomatic) which took place prior to the Kuwaiti occupation, that Iraq had drastically miscalculated the U.S. response. Saddam probably also overlooked the fact that the world was in the process of transforming from a bipolar to a unipolar power structure, and there was consequently no traditional superpower balance which could serve to check U.S. initiatives.

In the Ruwait crisis, Pakistan was faced with a strange dilemma. On one side was Saudi Arabia which had always been forthcoming with aid to Pakistan in times of crisis. During the 1965 and 1971 Wars, when Pakistan was fighting for its very survival against India, Saudi Arabia extended moral, political, and financial support to such an extent that it is hard to find a comparable example in the history of nations. The financial help subsequently extended

by Saudi Arabia to Pakistan to deal with the Afghanistan crisis was so much that it is difficult to overstate.

On the other side in the Kuwait crisis was Iraq, another Muslim country. Historically, there had not been a close relationship between Pakistan and Iraq because of Baghdad's close ties with the Soviet Union and with India. So, on the face of it, the choice was easy for Pakistan: join Saudi Arabia's coalition. Pakistan, however, has traditionally followed a policy of not joining in the aggressive options against any other Muslim country. So joining Saudi Arabia was acceptable, but only to the extent of defensive efforts. Pakistan could not compromise its traditional stand of not entering a war against another Muslim country. This "neutrality" undoubtedly created some strains in the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia and Pakistan-U.S. relationships. We shall now examine Pakistan's role in the Kuwait crisis in more detail.

# Pakistan's Role in the Gulf War

The Kuwait crisis erupted almost simultaneously with a major political upheaval in Pakistan. Ms. Benazir Rhutto's government had been replaced by an interim government pending national elections in October 1990. The resulting political vacuum in Pakistan was the main cause of initial ambivalence over taking part in the Gulf crisis. Notwithstanding, Pakistan was quick to condemn the Iraqi aggression and demanded immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Pakistan also decided to send troops as part of the coalition force in Saudi Arabia.

Was Pakistan's response sufficient in light of its traditionally strong ties with the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia? Many even in Pakistan would doubt it. However, the government of Pakistan was faced with a profound dilemma. Decisions became even more difficult because of the interim

arrangements in the government. Some factors which may have become obstacles in the decisionmaking process for Pakistan were as follows:

- o Traditionally, Pakistan has never participated in any armed aggression against a Muslim country. Pakistan's neutrality during the Iran-Iraq War is well known in the Muslim world. That is why Pakistan only committed itself to the defense of Saudi Arabia.
- o The U.S-Pakistan relationship was in sharp decline due to suspension of American aid to Pakistan. This had caused an emotional upheaval in Pakistan's public opinion. The government of Pakistan must have found itself in a difficult situation trying to justify its decision to join the U.S. led coalition when at the same time Pakistan was being deprived by Washington of much needed economic and military assistance.
- o Public opinion in Pakistan was also aroused due to the Iraqi rhetorical linkage of the Gulf crisis with the Palestine issue. There has been an historical disposition on the part of Pakistan to support the Palestinian cause in spite of the fact that the PLO leadership has on many occasions not reciprocated by supporting Pakistan in its disputes with India.
- o Pakistan has dealt with an increased threat on its borders with India ever since the independence movement gained momentum in Indian-held Kashmir in late 1989. Large-scale movements of troops by India along the Pakistani border and the hostile diplomatic environment in the region together forced Pakistan to keep its defense forces close to the international border. This must have become a compelling restraint on Pakistan, making it hard to spare troops for Saudi Arabia.
- o Pakistan is still housing three million Afghan freedom fighters on its soil. Since the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan has been left virtually alone to deal with this crisis. American aid has been drastically

reduced, whereas on the Soviet side, the Najibullah government still retains advisers and huge stockpiles of the erstwhile Soviet arsenal, and there are reports of resupply by the Soviets. Pakistan as a nation feels that since the Mujahideen have not returned to their country, they have been forced into a political defeat in spite of their military victory. Only lukewarm support on the part of the U.S. government to achieve final victory for the Mujahideen so that they could return honorably to their homeland has also been an irritant in Pakistan-U.S. relations affecting the public opinion of Pakistan.

The above factors have led to a situation in which Pakistan has not participated in the Gulf crisis in a manner which had been expected by the Gulf states, especially Saudi Arabia. It must have even surprised the many Pakistanis who very strongly feel a responsibility toward the Saudi Arabian cause. However, the Saudi government and other Gulf states must have been informed of these constraints by the Pakistan government so that the delicacy of Pakistan's position was understood by them. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, in an address to the nation on 20 January clearly highlighted the dilemma being faced by Pakistan. The Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relationship was, he said, the basic foundation on which he hoped that future policies could be built. But he also reiterated that diplomatic efforts should be stepped up so that Muslim bloodshed could be stopped. The basic stand was, however, that Iraq must leave Kuwait and that the Kuwaiti government must be reinstated.

### AFTER THE KUWAIT CRISIS

There are certain generally recognized principles of national security and foreign policy, which, if disregarded, put a nation in a dangerous position.

Most important are:

- o Sovereign nations have neither permanent enemies nor permanent friends; they have only permanent interests.
- o Self-reliance is a basic requirement of national security and an independent foreign policy. A state having extended dependency on another will to that extent have its security mortgaged to a foreign power.
- o Intelligent diplomacy and sound military planning contribute significantly to national defense.

Although the vision remains blurred about how the region will look after the present crisis is resolved, it will be useful to visualize a postwar peace and security plan for the region in light of the above fundamentals. What will be the effects of this war on the inter-Arab relationship and on the Arabs' relations with the United States? These effects have to be seen in terms of economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions.

From Pakistan's perspective, there will be even more complex factors to handle. On one hand, it is difficult for Pakistan to detach itself from this region because of its historically deep-rooted relations, while on the other hand Pakistan will experience some difficulties in dealing with those Arabs who expected much stronger support from Pakistan during the crisis. However, it is logically predictable that Pakistan's constraints during this crisis will be acknowledged, and any future security arrangements of the region will include Pakistan.

This part of the paper will be dealt with in the following sequence:

- o Future threats and challenges;
- o Security options;
- o A proposal for regional security.

### Future Threats and Challenges

The Iran-Iraq War was an upshot of the changes in the strategic environment following the 1979 Iranian Revolution. That war prepared the ground for Iraq's adventure into Kuwait. The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in turn brought in the multinational force dominated by the United States. Apparently, as this is written, one cycle of Gulf insecurity/instability is coming to a conclusion with the reduction of Iraq's offensive military strength.

How will the Gulf look in the future? Will there still be threats to the region's security and stability, and, if so, what security arrangements might be required to meet these threats? Before going into such questions, it would be appropriate to highlight some effects of this war on the region:

- o <u>Inter-Arab Rivalry</u>. The Kuwait war will probably leave deep wounds in the relationship of most Arab countries in particular and other Muslim countries in general. Besides Iraq, the other important country with grave domestic problems is Jordan. Its already fragile economy was shattered by the role Jordan played in the Kuwait crisis. Will its internal integrity meet the same fate as that of Lebanon? The Iraq-Egypt rivalry will undoubtedly continue, though on much more favorable terms for Egypt. Saudi Arabia will have future reservations about the role of Jordan, and Iraq. Iran's isolation by the Arab world remains, though Tehran's policy during the crisis was constructive. These interacting factors will have to be delicately handled by all players without injuring each other's national spirit and image.
- o <u>The Gulf Cooperation Council</u>. The formation of the GCC was the most visible regional response by the Arab states in the Gulf to the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War. However, it lacked the power base to defend its member Kuwait against Iraqi aggression. The military capability of the

GCC has been limited from the beginning by a lack of manpower. Demographic factors will continue to have a bearing on the defense potential of GCC members. As is well known, most of these countries have had to rely heavily on expatriate labor. The defense sector has had to compete with other sectors for scarce manpower and has not always been able to attract the best. Conscription could solve the problem to a certain extent, but the idea is not popular among the people. Political considerations would not allow the rulers to go in for conscription. The only other alternative is dependence on the manpower of friendly nations. In the past, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE have drawn contingents from Pakistan and Jordan, while Oman has been dependent on Iran (before the revolution) and Pakistan with Jordanian and British advisers. Similar arrangements will have to be made in the future to offset the demographic disadvantage.

o The Muslim World. The Persian Gulf War over Kuwait has shaken up the entire world in general and the Muslim world in particular. The war has driven a deep wedge into and between Muslim countries where the masses showed a strong resentment over the course of events. These countries strongly condemned the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, calling it an extremely brutal act and urging Iraq to withdraw and restore Kuwait's sovereign status.

Economic sanctions against Iraq were backed by the entire world, with the hope that Iraq would be pressed into responding to such resolute global pressure.

Most of the countries were even ready to join in to create a Pan-Islamic force in Saudi Arabia for its defense. Pakistan, Egypt, and Jordan had sufficient capability to take on such a job.

The Saudi decision to call for American and other Western troops became the first disappointment and point of concern challenging the consensus. The haste with which American troops reached the scene and with which the United States decided to implement the military option immediately after the UN deadline caused serious concern among many observers in the Muslim world. The bellicose attitude towards Iraq by President Bush was viewed by most of the Islamic countries as a reflection of the preset determination of the American Administration not to allow diplomacy to prevail so that Iraq could be militarily destroyed. The devastating punishment meted out to Iraq, which some U.S. spokemen characterized as a "crusade," is bound to leave deep impressions on the region long after the war. Strong voices are likely to be raised against the monarchies of Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states as well as other countries like Syria, Egypt, Turkey, and the USA.

- o <u>Presence of Foreign Troops</u>. After the crisis is over, there should be a quick withdrawal of Western troops from the region. Any delays will create doubts regarding intentions and thus lay grounds for deep political complications. This can convert the military victory into a political nightmare. Arrangements should be made to create a multinational Islamic force to take over security responsibilities, which should then be transferred to a regional military alliance along the lines of NATO. This will undoubtedly cause security concerns for Israel which can be eased by the following arrangements:
- oo Israel should be accorded recognition by the Arabs, while Israel should on its part settle the Palestine issue and hand over the occupied Arab territories.
- oo A gradual reduction of conventional military hardware should be initiated in the region. This arms control initiative should also include Iraq and Iran.
- on Muclear proliferation in the region should be strictly prohibited.

  Other unconventional weapons projects should be eliminated. The United States

will have to play a big role in this respect to persuade Israel to give up its nuclear weapons arsenal and future nuclear weapons programs.

- o <u>United Nations' Role</u>. After the Kuwait war, it would be immensely encouraging to see the United Nations emerging as a strong international body. For the first time, this organization has been able to evolve an unobstructed policy to resolve a major crisis. Though it is unfortunate that the United Nations had to take the option of war to implement its resolutions, the Kuwait crisis will set a precedent for the entire world in dealing with future aggressors. The United Nations must remain actively involved in this region to resolve the outstanding issues so that its credibility is further strengthened.
- o <u>Superpowers' Role</u>. The end of the Cold War made it possible for the United Nations to act effectively during the Kuwait crisis. It also made it possible for the United States to take initiatives without fear of superpower confrontation. Superpower cooperation will be a key to future prospects for Middle East peace.
- o <u>Competition for Regional Dominance</u>. The lust for regional dominance has always been very complicated and often unpredictable in the Persian Gulf. Considering the political dynamics of the area, such an ambition can still become a factor for instability and a threat to regional security. This threat can emerge in the following scenarios:
- on <u>Iranian Threat</u>. With Iraq defeated, Iranians may reembark on their venture of exerting leadership and influence over the Gulf states. Iran's neutrality during the Kuwait war served its long-term goal of promoting its influence in the region. Iran will not be acceptable in a leadership role to other regional countries until Tehran renounces its previous policy of exporting its revolution. It will take a long time for Iran to reassure its

neighbors regarding its motives. Even then, historical resistance to Iranian hegemony in the region will remain. The American public will continue to be skeptical of Iranian initiatives. As for the Soviet Union, it may accept Iran as a Gulf leader provided Tehran does not agitate its Asian Muslim population and as long as Iran remains nonaligned with the United States. Pakistan would also have a mixed response to Iranian resurgence. On one hand, Islamabad would like Iran to share responsibilities for security in the region and to reconcile its differences with the Arab states, while on the other hand Pakistan will be sensitive to any revolutionary agitation by Tehran.

- co Saudi Arabia—A Dominant Power. Saudi Arabia has a unique role in the region in particular and the entire Muslim world in general as custodian of Islamic holy places. Pakistan's response to a continued leadership role for Saudi Arabia will be warm and enthusiastic. Traditionally, Pakistan has always accepted Saudi Arabia as leader of the Muslim community. Islamabad can be expected to exert its influence to strengthen Saudi Arabian credibility as leader. However, effects of the recent war on their relationship will have to be negotiated. Considering the economic potential and manpower deficit of Saudi Arabia, it will be a logical partner for population—rich but resource—poor Muslim countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- on Iran-Iraq Collaboration. This possibility seems highly unlikely given the history of conflict between these two states. Prospects would be increased by the emergence of a Shiite government in Baghdad. This can be the most dangerous scenario as it would make the region highly unstable. The United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and most of the other Gulf states would hardly be comfortable should such a scenario develop. Nor would the rest of the world.

- on <u>Trilateral Power Sharing</u>. This would perhaps be the most practical and potentially most stable scenario for the region. Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia (together with its GCC partners) could create a tripod of regional power sharing which would make the region most stable and peaceful. These players would have similar interests at stake including the production and sale of oil. Competing ambitions would create checks and balances among these three erstwhile aspirants for regional dominance. The most promising means of realizing this scenario would be through rapprochement among the potential participants. Pakistan's reaction to such a scenario would once again be positive and warm. This scenario in fact accommodates Pakistan's vision of collective security responsibility for the region. The superpowers should facilitate such an arrangement and subsequently act as guarantors.
- o <u>Internal Threats</u>. Internal threats to peace and stability in the region may prove to be more significant than external threats. Salient concerns are as follows:
- on <u>Domestic Vulnerabilities</u>. Ever since the Gulf states opened their doors to outside influence, the danger of upheaval in their sociopolitical systems has increased. Western educated elites, technocrats trained abroad, and a growing middle class looking for political institutions where their voices can be heard have begun to make their presence felt and could become instrumental in effecting a change in the social set up of these countries. The Islamic sectarian divide of Sunni and Shiite adds an additional dimension to this problem. These states are likely to experience political instabilities which lead to a progressive change in their sociopolitical systems. These domestic vulnerabilities must be protected against exploitation to ensure regional stability. The best instrument may be evolutionary change.

oo <u>Political Chaos</u>. Bahrain's coup attempt and the Mecca incident of the early 1980s were politically instigated events, apparently inspired by foreign subversive movements. Such events aimed at creating political chaos and toppling governments cannot be ruled out in the future. They could be followed by foreign intervention in support of local dissidents. Such threats become more pronounced because of the presence of sizeable religious and ethnic minorities in various states.

oo <u>Arab-Israeli Conflict</u>. This ongoing problem has troublesome internal dimensions for states in the region in addition to the international ramifications discussed above.

### Security Options

Security is a multidimensional concept. It ranges from the physical, underwritten by military capability, through the political and economic to the ideological. An ideal security regime must meet all the major challenges and threats faced by a nation or region. In the case of small states, security is hard to achieve, thus adding to the gravity of threats. Such states are more vulnerable to both internal and external threats. Smaller states, especially those of the Gulf region, have sparse populations and shallow geographical extent to absorb determined aggression. Such strategic vulnerability was amply highlighted when Iraq only took a few hours to completely overrun Kuwait.

# Prerequisites for a Viable Security Proposal

Before considering a security proposal for this region, let us consider the requirements which any security option must fulfill to qualify for adoption.

- o <u>Credibility of Deterrence</u>. Any security arrangement must have a credible deterrence so that the potential threat is met before it is materialized. Deterrence must persuade the aggressor to believe that the benefits of the aggression would be far outweighed by its cost.
- o <u>Regionwide Acceptability</u>. The security plan must have unanimous acquiescence by all the regional states. Any exception to this will divide the region into blocs thus breeding insecurity.
- o <u>Adequate Strength</u>. The security arrangement must be potent enough to react effectively in case deterrence fails. It should be capable of putting up effective defense against any aggression at least until external assistance arrives.
- o <u>Multilateral Coordination</u>. Such coordination will increase deterrence and add effectiveness to defense. It can also generate better understanding amongst the nations and help in resolving issues.
- o <u>Political Stability</u>. Security arrangements should involve an understanding among the regional nations to help each other promote stability. Countries of the region should preferably accommodate each other rather than confronting. Radical elements must be discouraged from creating political instabilities to further their cause. Countries suffering from internal political instabilities will not be good security partners.
- o <u>Tolerance of Religious Differences</u>. The Middle East is a region which has a predominantly Muslim population except for the state of Israel and various Christian enclaves. Within the Muslim community there are factions of Sunni and Shiite, which have different outlooks to some extent. Any security arrangement for the region must neither tamper with these ideologies nor favor one against another. No security can be acceptable if one ideology is forced on another or vice versa. Export of one ideology through politico-military

means will have to be discouraged. Similarly, the Western world should not force its values and way of life on this region. To do so can be extremely counterproductive. The basic fact that all three religions, i.e., Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, have strong fundamental beliefs based on holy books means that they already share many values and are coexistable. Hence the ideological balance must not be tampered with.

- o <u>Economic Factor</u>. The Persian Gulf region is blessed with energy resources in such huge quantities that its strategic importance can never be overlooked. The entire world economy will continue to depend on this region for a long time. Within this region, however, there are countries that have been enormously endowed with resources, while just next to them are other nations which have nothing. In short, there is a serious problem of "haves" and "have nots" which needs to be addressed. The region's security arrangements should address the economic security of those countries that have not been fortunate to be endowed with economic resources.
- o <u>Israeli Factor</u>. Israel is uniquely placed in this region. Hence, no security arrangements will be workable or even acceptable until Israeli security is ensured. However, as discussed earlier, Israel will have to earn its security by accepting the Palestine cause and settling other disputes with other Arab nations.
- o <u>Global/Western/U.S. Interest</u>. In today's world, no region can isolate itself from the rest of the world because of global economic interdependency. This is particularly true of the Middle East and the Gulf region because of energy resources. Hence, it is logical that industrialized economies including those of Europe, Japan, the United States, and other countries must also have assurance of free access to the oil of this region. These economies should not feel threatened by oil blackmail or embargoes, as they were in the

1970s. Hence, any security arrangements should provide trade security to the world so that global economic activities are not threatened.

## A Proposal for Regional Security

To meet all the requirements listed above is a rather impossible task. However, the best one can do is to work out a formula which is closest to the ideal and is acceptable to most. Those who feel that the suggested formula does not measure up to their security requirements can be given additional guarantees through international agencies and organizations.

The Gulf region should have a collective security outlook in which all states should have a shared responsibility. The GCC should expand itself to handle the expanded security responsibility of the region. Each state may retain its own defensive force, but should contribute to the Gulf force, which should be the main force to ensure the region's security. This force should preferably be made up by drawing strength from countries in the following priority:

- o <u>Priority I</u>. The Gulf countries themselves should meet the manpower requirements insofar as possible.
- o <u>Priority II</u>. Additional manpower should be drawn from those countries that have traditionally strong ties with the Gulf states including Pakistan and Egypt.
- o <u>Priority III</u>. Countries participating in the Gulf security arrangements should not have any hostile attitude towards Israel and should accept a role for the United States, other Western countries, and Japan.

The Gulf countries would not be able to meet the challenge alone due to their scarce manpower resources. Hence, priority II and priority III will have to be considered. Two countries seem to be particularly well positioned to offer their services, i.e., Pakistan and Egypt. Both these countries have

been cooperating with U.S. policies in the past and have the credibility for acceptance by the Gulf states. Egypt has developed strong political and strategic ties with the GCC ever since it came into being, while Pakistan has actually provided large numbers of troops to Saudi Arabia since 1981 and military advisers to all Gulf countries. Let us consider each of these countries and see how well they fit into the security requirements of the region:

### o Egypt

- oo A moderate country in its outlook.
- oo Politically reasonably stable.
- oo Will be acceptable to both Saudi Arabia and the United States.
- oo Being part of the Arab community, will be involved in Arab politics and thus may create friction especially with Jordan, Syria, and the PLO.
  - oo Iraq and Iran will have strong opposition to this Egyptian option.
- oo In the event of a radical change in the Egyptian Government, the entire enterprise would be put at risk in a way reminiscent of the Nasser era.

## o Pakistan

- oo Moderate in its policies. At times pressure groups can create some concern in the country; however the government continues to prevail by following a moderate foreign policy.
- oo Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have always had security arrangements and deep cultural relations. Though the Kuwait crisis will cause some concern, it can be remedied by mutual negotiations.
  - oo No Arab rivalries involved.
  - oo Iran and Iraq would be least agitated.
- oo Defense infrastructure already exists, which can serve as a base to develop further.

- oo India would vehemently oppose Pakistan's participation. Already, New Delhi is talking of a "Muhharraum Gift" 29 to Pakistan, which is an unfounded analogy.
- oo Israel will object if Pakistan does not modify its policy towards
  Israel.

In order to have any active role in Gulf security arrangements, Pakistan will have to make certain adjustments in its policies so that the existing irritants between Pakistan and other countries such as the Gulf states, the United States, and Israel are removed. To this end, Pakistan should consider the following:

- o The strength of Pakistan's ability to influence events in the region would largely depend on it own internal stability.
- o Once again, Pakistan will have to plead its case for falling short of the expectations of the Gulf states in its actions during the Kuwait crisis. However, considering the justifications mentioned earlier in this paper, it should not be difficult for Pakistan to make its case. On the other hand, Pakistan is ideally placed to mediate between pro-West Muslim countries and those that feel betrayed by the Kuwait war. Pakistan must embark upon an intensively active diplomacy to achieve this goal, else the Muslim divisions will become permanent and make the region unstable over the long run. The United States must realize Pakistan's delicate situation and help Islamabad's diplomatic efforts.
- o Pakistan has to address the irritants which have cropped up in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Historically, Pakistan and the United States have always had close ties because of common interests and mutual accommodations. The recent divergence of opinions has to be addressed and resolved. Some of the important subjects in this regard are:

- oo Pakistan should discuss its nuclear policy with the United States and win its case by logical reasoning rather than broken down communication. After all, Pakistan's imperatives of economic development are linked with a peaceful nuclear option, thus strengthening Islamabad's case. <sup>30</sup> The Indian nuclear program is a security concern for Pakistan for which Pakistan might seek U.S. guarantees.
- on Pakistan should review its Israeli policy in light of the changed geostrategic environment. In fact, it should initiate a case through OIC to get a consensus of the Muslim world, so that a regional policy could be evolved. Pakistan should also negotiate with Israel through the United States and Egypt so that trust could be created between the two.
- on The differences created between Pakistan and United States during the recent Gulf war will have to be addressed and diplomatically resolved. Both sides will have their own views, pointing at their expectations, reservations, and objections about each other's role during the war. However, it should not be impossible for each to satisfy the other and recreate their historically strong ties in the larger interest of the region's security and stability.

### CONCLUSION

Security and stability of the Persian Gulf is a delicate issue, which has become even more complex in light of recent events in the region. It must also be borne in mind that security is best and most effective when it is shared, when a balance of strength is maintained and when the affected countries feel able, based on their concerted strength, to discourage aggression. Regional security can only be achieved when the strength of one country does not cause a sense of insecurity among the other countries

of the region. This can be avoided by asking countries to mutually share regional security problems.

Pakistan's perspective on peace and security in the Gulf is based upon the fact of its being geographically contiguous to the region, its historical links and religious affinities with the Gulf countries, and its traditionally friendly relationship with the United States. The fact of geography makes Pakistan an indispensable element of Gulf strategy. The security proposal presented in this paper is one course of action, which can be debated and further improved. Additional thoughts can be focused on alternative options. However, the best solution will likely be one which is built around regional resources and having least or no presence of outsiders.

War cannot be eliminated from relations between states any more than crime can be eliminated from human society. Aggressive states like human criminals, will continue to exist and prey upon the smaller, weaker states. However, the aggressive and bigger states must be prevented from committing outright murder or assault. War can be minimized and peace preserved by:

- o maintaining the right balance between opposing forces;
- o not provoking an aggressive state to commit aggression;
- o having friendly neighbors that can stand by each other's defense; and
- o creating sufficient strength to warm the aggressor that his venture will not be easy and will not go unpunished.

The Gulf has become embroiled in tragic conflicts one after the other.

Intraregional conflicts have proven to be a greater source of instability than extraregional interference. Pakistan's physical location, religious affinities, and historical linkage with the region make it compelling for Islamabad's policymakers to remain actively involved in the security of the region. These realities make Pakistan's participation in the Gulf region

virtually unavoidable. It is because of these factors that Pakistan was obliged to contribute the fourth largest contingent of Muslim troops to the multinational coalition for the defense of Saudi Arabia. After the present crisis is finally resolved, Pakistan will likely have even greater involvement in the region for which the leadership in the country should have its strategies worked out.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1. Hermann Frederick Eilts, "The Persian Gulf Crisis: Perspectives and Prospects," The Middle East Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1, Winter 1991, pp. 5-22.
- 2. UN Security Council Resolution No. 678 dated 29 November 1990 authorized the U.S.-led multinational coalition to use force to eject Iraq from Kuwait.
- 3. Business International, <u>The Economist</u> Intelligence Unit, "Country Profile-Iraq 1990-1991," p. 24.
- 4. The Guardian in its August 1987 issue describes another small state, Kuwait, as "an oil well declaring itself a state."
  - 5. Karbala and Najaf.
  - 6. The Treaty was signed in 1972.
  - 7. The Baghdad Pact was signed in 1955.
- 8. The revived relationship developed in a limited and peculiar way. America was not willing to provide military hardware to Iraq, but passed on military intelligence about Iranian military intentions and capabilities. While the U.S. only provided some credits to Iraq, it did not object to other governments' providing arms/military hardware.
  - 9. The Muslim Empire in India was established in 1526 by the Muchals.
- 10. Baluchistan and the Sind are presently parts of Pakistan, which still very proudly preserve the cultural legacy of the Middle East/Gulf states created by this expedition.
  - 11. Masuma Hasan, Pakistan in a Changing World, p. 92.
- 12. The Organization of the Islamic Conference was established in 1970. Pakistan hosted the second Islamic Summit in 1974.
  - 13. Gwadar is a seaport in the Baluchistan Province of Pakistan.
- 14. United States Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, Background Notes—Oman, June 1989. The Arabian Sea coastline in Gwadar falls in the Mekran District of Baluchistan. Residents of this district are known as Mekranis.
  - 15. "Business in Brief," The Middle East, January 1985, p. 21.
  - 16. <u>Ibid</u>.
- 17. "Pakistan Survey-Pakistan and The Middle East," <u>The Middle East</u>, March 1985, p. 70.

- 18. M.G. Weibaum and Gautam Sen, "Pakistan Enters the Middle East," Orbis, Fall 1978, pp. 595-612.
- 19. The Baluchistan Province of Pakistan has a common border with Iran. The Baluch Tribe lives on both sides of the border. Baluchis living in Pakistan constitute 2.5 percent of that country's total population, i.e., 2.8 million out of 113 million (approx.). In Iran, the Baluchi population is 19 percent of its total population, i.e., 10.5 million out of 55.6 million (figure taken from 1990 estimates given in the World Almanac and Book of Facts—1991).
- 20. "Feature/Pakistan—Zia's New Role in the Gulf," The Middle East, April 1983, pp. 33-34.
- 21. "Pakistan Survey--Pakistan and The Middle East," <u>The Middle East</u>, March 1985, pp. 67-72. According to this article, 33 percent of Pakistan's total exports go to Middle East countries, p. 70.
  - 22. "Zia's New Role in the Gulf," The Middle East, April 1983, pp. 33-34.
  - 23. <u>Ibid</u>., p. 33.
- 24. Jamal Rasheed, "Pakistan—A Role for the Navy," <u>Middle East International</u>, 4 May 1984, p. 11.
- 25. Jamal Rasheed, "Pakistan's Military Links with the Gulf," <u>Middle East International</u>, 24 August 1984, pp. 14-15.
- 26. Lenore G. Martin, <u>The Unstable Gulf: Threats from Within</u>, Lexington Books, 1984, p. 127.
- 27. Rasheed, "Pakistan's Links with the Persian Gulf," <u>Middle East International</u>, 4 May 1984, pp. 10-11.
  - 28. "Zia's New Role in the Gulf," The Middle East, April 1983, p. 83.
- 29. K. Subrahmanyam, "Gulf Crisis and Indian Security," <u>India News</u> (Washington, D.C.), <u>September 1990</u>, p. 8. The term "Muhharraum Gift" is meant to convey <u>India's cynical view that Pakistan is always looking</u> for gifts or handouts, in this case during Muhharraum, which fell in the period just after the war over Kuwait.
- 30. Directorate of Films and Publications, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, <u>Pakistan 1988—An Official Hand Book</u>, pp. 454-455.

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